

PROMOTING PROFICIENCY



Pedagogical Strategies for Personalizing Language Learning

BYU Spanish Teachers Workshop ♦ June 2013

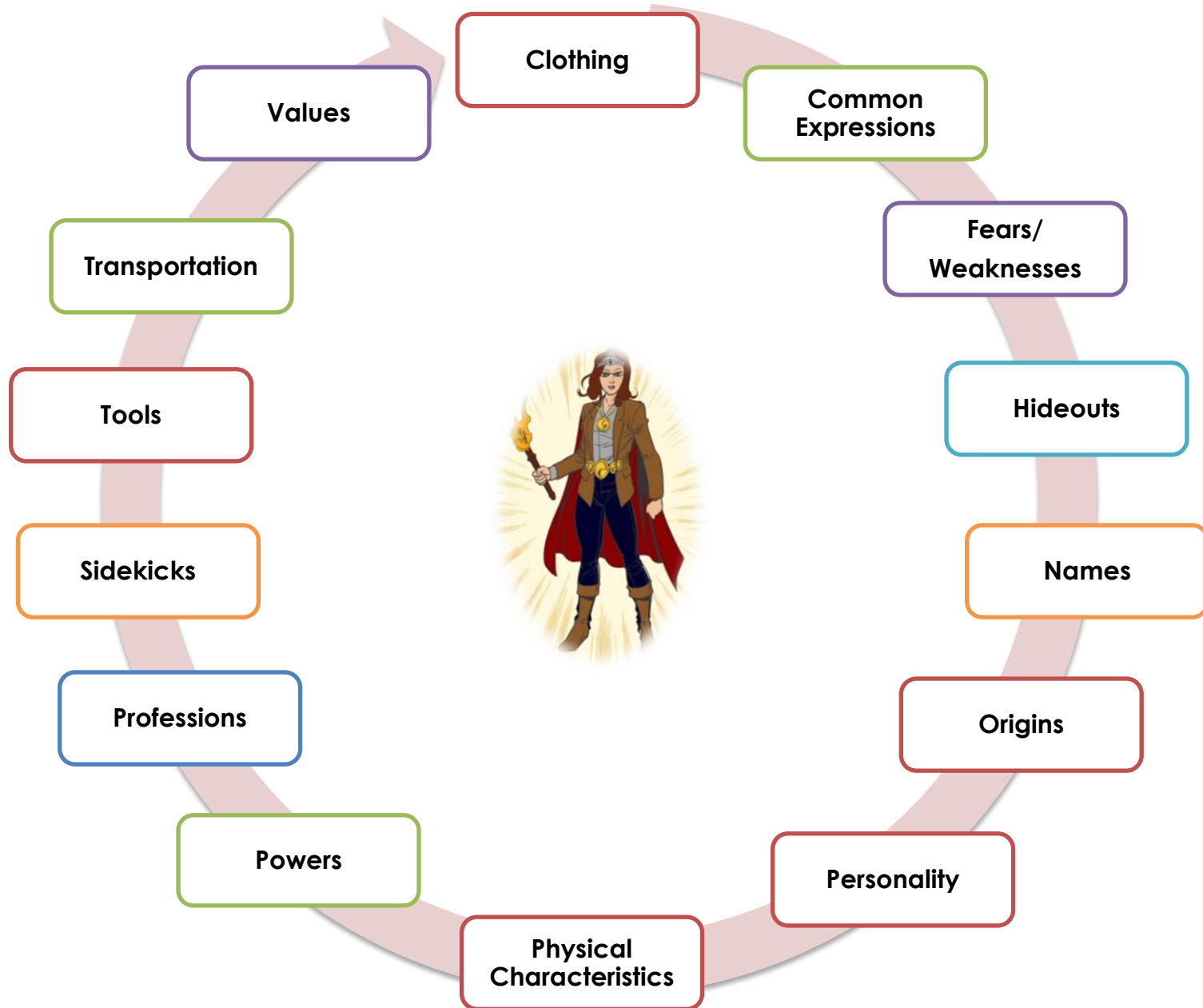
Cherice Montgomery, Ph.D.

Brigham Young University

cherice_montgomery@byu.edu

Superhero Brainstorming Sheet

Name: _____



Thinking Template: Personalization

What is personalized learning?

One idea from **Partner A:**

One idea from **Partner B:**

One idea from **Partner C:**

My **revised definition** of *personalized learning* is . . .

My Reasons

I want to personalize learning in my classroom because . . .

My Insights

Some of my “ahas” about personalizing learning . . .

Thinking Template: Personalization

Primary Concepts


Key Principles

"... Search for principles. Carefully separate them from the detail used to explain them. Principles are concentrated truth, packaged for application to a wide variety of circumstances. ... It is worth great effort to organize the truth we gather to simple statements of principle" (Richard G. Scott)

- 1)
- 2)
- 3)
- 4)
- 5)
- 6)
- 7)


My Questions

Say Something: Editing “Kodachrome” by Tom Welch


 **SAY SOMETHING:** Read each paragraph that ends with a mouth picture, then say something about the reading to your partner: Comment, Example, Experience, Prediction, or Question.

Remind me again why a student should want to succeed in school. 

Interesting experience today when I attended a meeting to discuss a school's possible involvement in a research project focused on the relationship between noncognitive factors and academic performance (Farrington, C.A., Roderick, M., Allensworth, E., Nagaoka, J., Keyes, T.S., Johnson, D.W., & Beechum, N.O. (2012). Teaching adolescents to become learners. The role of noncognitive factors in shaping school performance: A critical literature review. Chicago: University of Chicago Consortium on Chicago School Research).

It was interesting for many reasons, but one of the main reasons was the assumption that students should want to do well on a curriculum that is arbitrarily chosen for them, designed in isolation from them, and delivered in a time and space over which they have absolutely no control. 

The intro uses phrases such as “To persevere academically requires that students stay focused on a goal despite obstacles (9)”. I would ask who that goal belongs to. I can assure you that the “goal” is one the teacher has established. I know very few instances where students are given the opportunity to set personal learning goals that are not aligned to some degree with the curriculum the teacher is charged with delivering.


The report also speaks of the importance of the need to “truly master course materials”. (9). When do students ever get to ask “Why?” when it comes to course materials. One of my favorite song lines is from the opening of Kodachrome by Paul Simon. “When I think back on all the crap I learned in high school, it's a wonder I can think at all.” 


While I can respect the education experts behind both the original study and any staff members who will be implementing it for the next 30 months, I still find it baffling.

I find it to be yet another example of trying to “fix” what is going on to make the system run smoothly — “fix” student noncognitive behaviors so they will be more successful at what they are told to do in the cognitive realm and when we tell them to do it.

Say Something: *Editing “Kodachrome”* by Tom Welch

I mentioned in a recent blog post the idea that student learning is not the goal of the modern school system. The goal is to ensure a smoothly running teaching environment with enough demonstrable measures of student “success” to justify keeping it going. Here is a line from the report that captured this idea: “Teaching adolescents to become learners depends in large part of the identification of effective strategies that teachers can share with students to help them achieve their academic goals [*italics mine*].” Either way you interpret the personal possessive “their”, it’s troubling. If it refers to academic goals of the students, these have already been defined by the teachers (doing well on the curriculum that has been forced on them). Can you imagine if the academic goals for a 9th grade student in English/Language Arts had nothing to do with the 9th grade curriculum but were goals that the learner had chosen?? Reading the sentence with a bit more irony reinforces the notion that it’s the teacher’s academic goal — to have students “do well” that has been chosen for the student.

I’m wrestling with how I can plant and nourish seeds of innovation in the heart of a school run by caring professionals who are dedicated to a notion of learning that is probably at odds with what many of them really believe and at odds with the reasons many of them chose the profession. 

My suggestion for implementing the research from the report in the school? Let the incoming freshman spend half of each day on learning projects and interests that they have chosen for themselves. Focus on those factors highlighted in the report, “Academic Perseverance (grit, tenacity, delayed gratification, self-discipline, self-control), Academic Behaviors, Academic Performance, Academic Mindsets (I belong in this academic community. My ability and competence grow with my effort. I can succeed at this. This work has value for me.), Academic Perseverance, Academic Behaviors, and Academic Performance (9).” I would be willing to bet that students who spent half of their time for a year (with respectful support from the team of teachers) selecting and pursuing their individual learning goals using these traits would end up much better off in the short term and the long run than by becoming compliant albeit “successful” students in traditional courses. In addition, I bet they would look back on high school with a sense of the wonder of it all! 

From: Welch, Tom. (2013, January 7). *Editing kodachrome*. *Twelchconsulting.com Blog*. Retrieved January 7, 2013, from <http://twelchconsulting.com/blog/2013/01/07/editing-kodachrome/>

Personalized Learning Chart

Personalization	Differentiation	Individualization
starts with the learner	starts with groups of learners	starts with the needs of the individual learner
connects with interests, passions, and aspirations	adjusts to learning needs of groups of learners	accommodates learning needs of the individual
learners actively participate in the design of their learning	explicit instruction based upon the learning needs of groups of learners	explicit instruction based upon the learning needs of an individual learner
learners have a voice and choice on what they learn	teachers create or adapt instruction and choose roles for learners based on different needs of learners	teachers customize lessons and tasks for learners based on individual needs
different objectives for each learner	same objectives for groups of learners	same objectives for learners with specific objectives for individuals who receive one-on-one support
learner selects appropriate technology and resources to support their learning	technology and resources are selected to support the learning needs of groups of learner	technology and resources are selected to support the learning needs of an individual learner
learners build a network of peers, teachers, and others to guide and support their learning	learners are reliant on the guidance of teachers to support their learning	learners are dependent on individual teachers or para-professionals to support their learning
competency-based models where the learner demonstrates mastery	based on Carnegie unit (seat time), grade level	based on Carnegie unit (seat time), grade level
assessment AS learning	assessment FOR learning	assessment OF learning
teachers develop capacity to create independent learners who set goals, monitor progress, and reflect on learning	assessment involves time-based testing and teachers provide feedback to advance learning	summative assessment is grade-based and involves time-based testing which confirms what learners know and don't know

Personalized Learning Chart by [Barbara Bray and Kathleen McClaskey](#) is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivs 3.0 Unported License](#).



Barbara Bray barbara.bray@gmail.com
 Kathleen McClaskey khmccclaskey@gmail.com

Website: barbarabray.net
 Website: edtech-associates.com

X X X X X X X

X X X X X X X

X X X X X X X

X X X X X X X

X X X X X X X

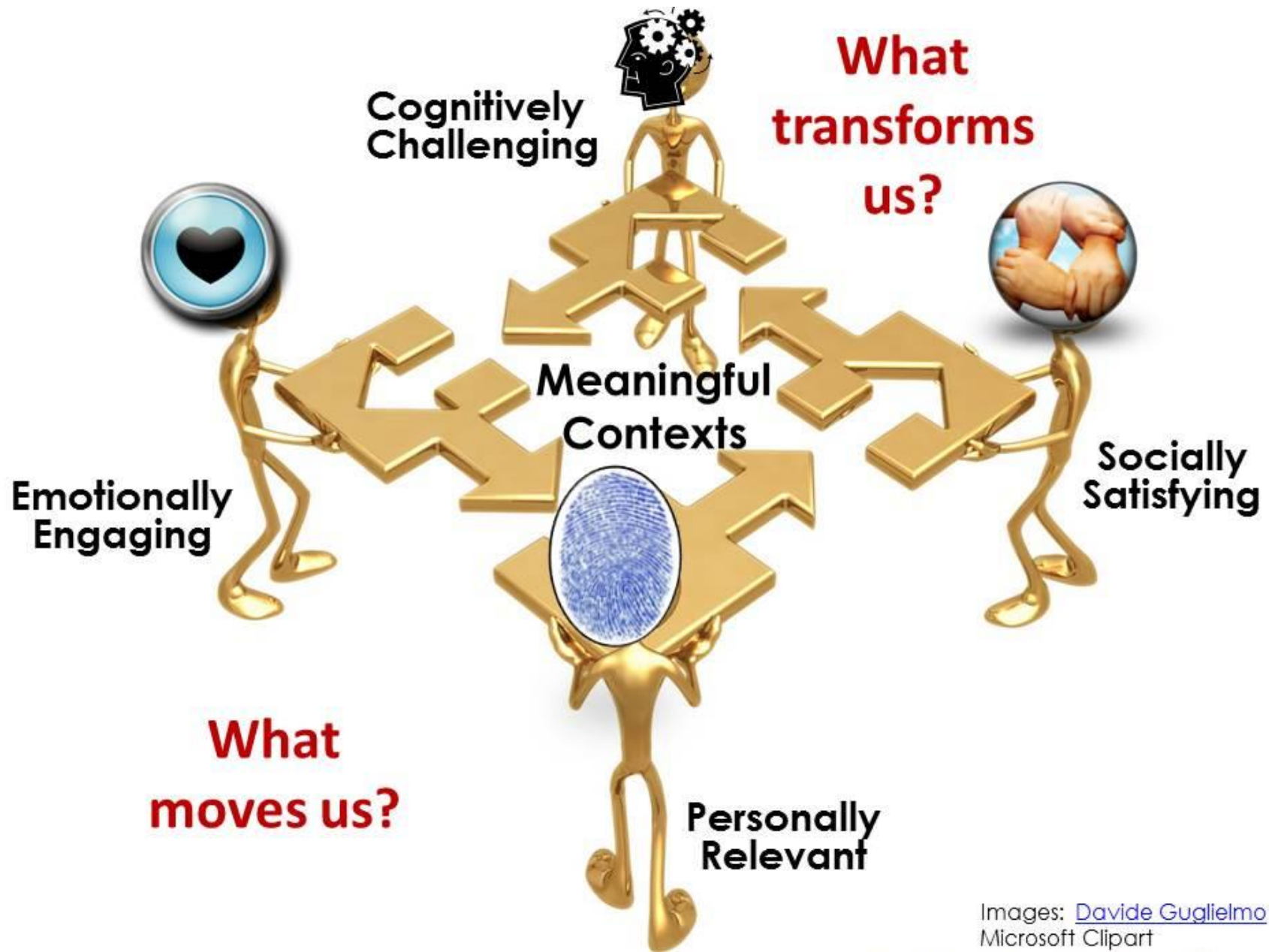
X X X X X X X

X X X X X X X

X X X X X X X

HOW FAR DOES
YOUR CREATIVITY
GO?

Transformative Learning Experiences



Images: [Davide Guglielmo](#) & Microsoft Clipart



Image: [Oddball27](#)